



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Northeast Fisheries Science Center
166 Water Street
Woods Hole, MA 02543-1026

October 10, 2006

MEMORANDUM FOR: AIS Observers

FROM: David Potter
Branch Chief, FSB

SUBJECT: Personal Camera Use

I would like you to remind all observers that taking personal photographs while working on fishing vessels as an observer is strictly prohibited. Photos are to be taken ONLY for species identification purposes. Cameras issued by the Program are the only ones to be used while observers are working on a fishing vessel. Personal cameras, of any type, are not permitted.

I realize it's very tempting for observers to take their own cameras on a trip – there are scenes and sights out there that most people never see. However, the rule is in place for several very important reasons. Photos can be taken out of context and result in misinterpretation of the facts or events. It has taken our Program many years of concerted effort to win the trust of captains and crews with regard to photographing incidental takes. When photographs which include visible boat names and identifiable crew members appear in any public medium, that trust is jeopardized.

We have recently learned that photographs taken by several observers in our Program have appeared on a public domain site. This is a very serious matter and could be grounds for decertification. Images need to be removed and observers told of the consequences surrounding the issue.

If you have any questions regarding this memo, please contact me at (508) 495-2262 or David.Potter@noaa.gov.

Thank you.

